

1997: Year of the seafarer

By Linda Laws
Community relations advisor

There are several events to mark the Year of the Seafarer. One of them is happening right on our doorstep in Ipswich this June, when hundreds of sailing boats will be floating up the River Orwell for a huge festival of sail. Some of these boats will be on their way up to the Tall Ships Race taking place in Aberdeen, Scotland, in July. A replica of Capt. James Cook's ship, the Endeavour, will dock on the River Thames at Greenwich March 25 following a journey starting at Fremantle, Australia. Stops along the way include Durban, Port Elizabeth, and Cape Town, South Africa.

Sail Ipswich '97

Sail Ipswich '97 will be the largest waterside event and festival seen in Suffolk for decades. At least 150 ships will attend the event June 27, 28 and 29 at the Ipswich Wet Dock. Historic vessels, musicians, performers and practitioners of crafts related to the sea will be part of the event. Ships including tall ships, training vessels, traditional working craft and classic yachts will attend. For more information, call (01473) 787346.



Photo by John Longley

Endeavour, pictured at Doubtful Sound, New Zealand.

The story of the Endeavour

Capt. James Cook set sail for the Pacific Aug. 26, 1768, in H.M. (His Majesty's) Bark Endeavour on a voyage of exploration and scientific discovery. This voyage was to be a major step for Britain and the world in advancing knowledge of geography, navigation, natural science and astronomy.

The Endeavour, which has been constructed to the same specifications as Cook's original ship, will stay in London's port until April 13 when it begins its voyage around Britain, calling at 15 ports, before leaving for the United States of America in October. While at each port, the ship will be open to the public. East Anglia's port of call will be Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, between April 19 - 28.

Admission for adults is £5.50 and £3 for children. Senior citizens and students are £4.50. Families (two adults and three children) are £16. Admission includes the Endeavour exhibition, the National Maritime Museum, the Queen's House and the Old Royal Observatory including Cook's navigational instruments display. Tickets are also valid for a second visit within one year of the first. Hours are 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., seven days a week. For details, call (0181) 858-4422 or (0181) 312-6565.

Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race

The Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race is July 12 - 15 in Aberdeen Harbour, Grampian, Scotland. The racing entertainment includes street theatre, children's activities, music and maritime skills displays. A fireworks display is July 14.

People can also try Dragon Boat Racing on the River Dee July 12 and see the Grand Parade July 13. The quayside events are free, but there may be entry charge on some city events. For details, call (01224) 252150.

Famous local navigators

Two of the most famous local navigators, Capt. George Vancouver and Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, were born and lived in Norfolk. In fact, some of their work still applies today. The charts plotted by Capt. George Vancouver were so accurate they are still used by today's seafarers. His meticulous charts were used much later to settle the boundary disputes between the United States and Canada.



For more information about living in Britain, call me at Ext. 3145.

Capt. George Vancouver

Three hundred years ago, King's Lynn, which is 40 minutes northwest of RAF Lakenheath, was one of the country's most thriving ports. So it is not surprising to find it was the birthplace of at least one famous navigator. Vancouver was only 14 when he set sail on the Resolution with Cook in 1772. He actually saw Cook killed in Hawaii. At the age of 18, his sea voyages equated to having circumnavigated the world three times. His most historic voyage took him four years to complete, resulting in the discovery of Vancouver Island, British Columbia and his charting of the much-fabled northwest passage from California to Alaska. Vancouver, Canada, is also named after him. Vancouver died at the early age of 40 following this voyage.

A plaque dedicated to Vancouver is sited on Purfleet Quay, near the Custom House in King's Lynn. Vancouver's father worked in the Custom House as deputy collector and was instrumental in Vancouver being allowed to travel with Cook because of his influential family connections.

Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson

Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson is acknowledged as Britain's greatest naval hero. His contribution to Admiral Sir John Jervis' victory over the Spanish at St. Vincent has special significance. The battle, fought off Cape St. Vincent, was instrumental in turning the tide of the naval war in favour of Britain. During the battle, Nelson fought as no other commodore ever had. He broke the sacred line of battle to take on a much bigger ship, hoping to disable it and help win the battle.

He took the ship, but not before his own had the sails, masts and wheel shot away. He then boarded another ship, the San Nicolas, to use it to launch another attack. The battle ended with the Spanish flag captain presenting his admiral's sword in surrender.

Nelson's most famous and last battle was the Battle of Trafalgar during which he lost his life on the Victory. He was born in the small picturesque Norfolk village of Burnham Thorpe, just off the north Norfolk coast.